

December 2001

**MCKENZIE RIVER FOCUS
WATERSHED COORDINATION
YEAR-END REPORT**

Annual Report



DOE/BP-00000351-1



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McKenzie River Focus Watershed Coordination

Year-End Report

To The Bonneville Power Administration

Fiscal Year 2001

Project No. 199607000



*"..the Council's mission is to foster better stewardship of the
McKenzie Watershed resources through voluntary partnerships
and collaboration..."*

Title of Project: McKenzie River Focus Watershed Coordination

BPA Project Number: 199607000

Business acronym: MWC

Business name of organization: McKenzie Watershed Council. Fiscal Agent - Cascade Pacific Resource Conservation and Development, Inc.

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Province: Lower Columbia

Subbasin: Willamette

Short Description: BPA funding, in conjunction with contributions from numerous partners organizations, supports the McKenzie Watershed Council's efforts to coordinate restoration and monitoring programs of federal, state, local government, and residents within the watershed. The goal of the MWC is to improve resource stewardship and conserve fish, wildlife, and water quality resources. The MWC will always have a baseline program centered on relationship building and information sharing. Objectives for FY01 included: 1) Continue to coordinate McKenzie Watershed activities among diverse groups that restore fish and wildlife habitat in the watershed, with a focus on the lower McKenzie, including private lands and the McKenzie-Willamette confluence area; 2) Influence behavior of watershed residents to benefit watershed function through a strategic and comprehensive outreach and education program, utilizing Assessment and Conservation Strategy information to provide a context for prioritized action; 3) Continue to maintain and sustain a highly functional watershed council; 4) Maintain and improve water quality concerns through the continuation of Council-sponsored monitoring and evaluation programs; and 5) Continue to secure other funding for watershed restoration and protection projects and Council operations.

McKenzie Watershed Council Partner Organizations: City of Eugene, City of Springfield, Army Corps. of Engineers, Eugene Water and Electric Board, Springfield Utility Board, Hynix Semiconductor, Division of State Lands, Bureau of Land Management, US Forest Service, Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, Lane County, McKenzie Flyfishers, McKenzie Residents Association, McKenzie River Guides, East Lane SWCD, McKenzie River Trust, Mohawk Community Council, and Weyerhaeuser Company.

Operation and Maintenance Accomplishments

Funding from the Bonneville Power Administration and McKenzie Watershed Council Partner organizations allowed for continued administration of the McKenzie Focus Watershed Council (MWC). The demands and workload on the MWC continued to increase in FY01, with the Council making the transition from a “coordinating and planning” organization to one that is increasingly focused toward community involvement and implementing restoration projects. These are the demands being placed on the Council from its active stakeholder groups. With the increased expectations, administrative duties have naturally increased, and the staff has made every effort to maintain a high level of efficiency. For FY01, an effective Council Staff remained in place, comprised of a full-time Coordinator and part-time education and project managers. In addition, the Council recognized that with its role expanding in restoration project implementation, it needed to continue to build trust and relationships with watershed landowners and residents. To help toward this end, the Council hired a part-time public outreach manager, which has increased the Council’s effectiveness in communicating its goals and objectives to watershed residents.

The Council and its Executive Committee continued to regularly meet, and 11 monthly meetings were planned, staffed, and recorded (see website: www.mckenziewatershedcouncil.org). Work plans were developed and monitored at these meetings, and important information sharing and partnership-building continued to be facilitated. Guest speakers provided updates on a host issues, these included:

Willamette Restoration Initiative, Senate Bill 1010

Agriculture Plans, Designation of Scenic Highway Status under Oregon Forest Practices Act, South Sister Volcanic Activity, Lane County’s Updated Riparian Ordinance, Conservation Tax-Base and other important issues within the watershed. The Council coordinated a float trip exploring the confluence of the McKenzie with the Willamette River: an important area for maintaining biodiversity in the watershed, where the Council is facilitating conservation opportunities with the myriad of stakeholders in this area.



The need for information sharing continued to grow as a key component of the MWC. Council Staff responded to a variety of inquiries, including requests from local and state officials; questions about regulations from individual property owners; and questions from residents with general concerns about the watershed. MWC also played a significant role in coordination with other Willamette Basin Councils, in particular, the formation of a Network of Watershed Councils, so as to respond to state legislative issues that affect Councils. The MWC also participated in Watershed Council Day at the legislature, where all of Lane and Linn Counties legislators were briefed on MWC activities. In addition, on several occasions, the MWC was

fortunate to have Representative Al King (serves on Salmon and Stream Committee) and Senator Tony Corcoran attend Council and Executive Committee meetings. To spur grass-roots dialogue on watershed issues, the MWC coordinated a very successful breakfast with Representative Al King and it provided many watershed residents and other Upper Willamette Watershed Council participants an opportunity to discuss issues.

The use of e-mail as a tool for sharing information continues to grow, and the Council maintains a large mailing list that distributes information several times per month (*McKenzie Watershed Electronic News*). The Council's newsletter was re-formatted to a more user-friendly style, and its popularity has grown. It was produced 3 times and was received by over 6,000 watershed households on each distribution.

Support of the flourishing Mohawk Watershed Partnership continued by the MWC. The MWC provided funding, enabling this group to continue its communication and restoration work in this important tributary to the McKenzie River.

The Council's partnership with the McKenzie River Trust, a local land conservancy, continues to grow. MRT's acquisition of \$500,000 from the Eugene Water and Electric Board was actively supported by the MWC. The Council serves on a committee that looks at potential properties to either obtain or develop conservation agreements for. This will be of value to the long-term biological condition of the watershed. The MWC-MRT partnership will become even more valuable as the Council moves into implementing its Conservation Strategy.



The Council continues to support the Metropolitan Endangered Species Act Coordination Team by providing technical expertise and advice. This type of relationship aids the Council in bringing forth water quality issues with municipalities.

MWC spent a considerable amount of time working at larger scales, such as the Willamette Basin. By serving on the Willamette Restoration Initiative Board, MWC continued to represent the valley's watershed Councils. Staff also served on the American Heritage River Steering committee and on the Willamette Province Advisory Committee.

Exploring the benefits of re-organizing into a 501c3 entity was discussed by the MWC. After meeting with a non-profit attorney, and considering the pro's and con's, the Council deferred the decision and will revisit the issue with more information in FY02.

Seeking funds for Council operations and projects is always an ongoing task. During FY01, the Council was successful in obtaining additional funds for restoration projects, public outreach, planning, and education. Approximately \$165,000 in grants were secured from multiple funders.

Planning and Design Accomplishments

Many of the MWC Working Groups, staffed by Partner Organizations continued to meet and usher along the Council's activities. For example, the Water Quality Monitoring Working Group completed a comprehensive review of the Council's monitoring programs and developed recommendations for future monitoring which the MWC adopted. The Spring Chinook Working Group along with the Habitat Conservation Group combined forces to produce the McKenzie Watershed Conservation Strategy from the Sub-Basin Assessment. The Council now has a prioritized framework to conduct restoration with a large number of projects identified for implementation in the coming years (see below).

Through an OWEB grant and BPA Coordination funds, Fish, Wildlife and Flood Control Project Planning Guidelines were developed by the McKenzie-Willamette Confluence Committee, which is comprised of landowners, gravel companies, regulators, and technical folks. These Guidelines have enabled 4 restoration projects to be developed for the 11,000 acre planning area. Conservation Planning will continue for the Committee in the coming year. It is anticipated that BPA funds will be utilized to a greater extent in the outyears 2003-005 for this process.



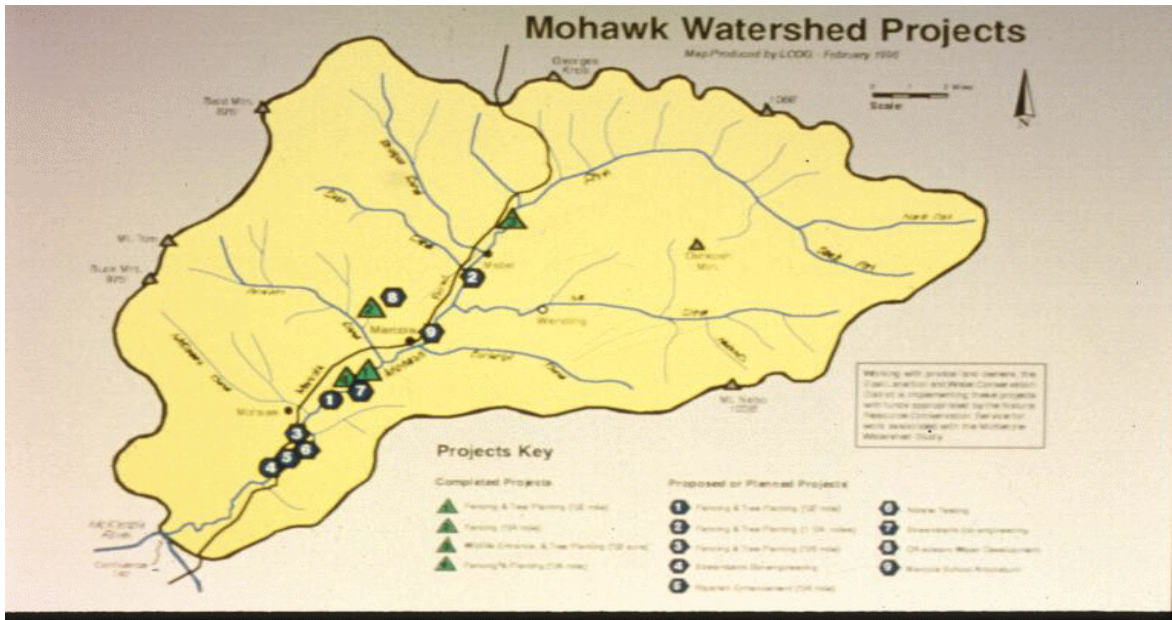
During FY01, BPA funds were utilized by the MWC for the production of the McKenzie Watershed Conservation Strategy. This document was a product of monthly meetings of a Technical Committee. Vision, goals, objectives, action items, and benchmarks were established. A public outreach portion was included in the Strategy, and short-term projects were identified. The Strategy provides a prioritized, spatially explicit framework for watershed restoration and protection. In the next couple of years, the MWC will be primarily an implementing body for conservation projects, based on the strategic planning framework the Council now possesses.



Here in the immediate future, the Council applied for and received NOAA funds to implement restoration projects on prioritized medium-size tributaries of the McKenzie. The projects are intended to improve juvenile spring chinook rearing habitat which has been identified a major limiting factor for threatened spring chinook salmon in the McKenzie watershed. Multiple private landowners are engaged in these projects.

Construction and Implementation Accomplishments

Several restoration projects were implemented in FY01, which addressed water quality and temperature concerns, as well as re-establishing juvenile spring chinook habitat. Projects were implemented along the mainstem McKenzie and Mohawk Rivers, Holden, and Cedar Creeks. Over 80 volunteers helped plant over 5000 trees, repair and install new riparian fencing and install off watering devices for cattle. In addition, 5 culverts blocking fish passage were replaced.



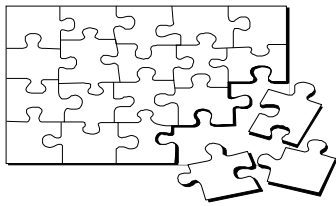
The MWC and the Central Cascades Adaptive Management Area co-hosted a natural resources and restoration workshop in May. Approximately 250 people from throughout the area attended, and the agenda included presentations by several Council Partners and MWC staff.

In collaboration with the other Upper Willamette Watershed Councils, MWC led the way working with Lane County Public Works to address fish passage issues under County Roads. This effort was jump-started by Council Coordinators recommending to the County Commissioners that fundamental policy changes were needed by the County to replace fish-blocking culverts.

Through the MWC education program, several local schools participated in stenciling storm-water drains (*Dump No Waste, Drains to River*). It is anticipated that this program will expand in '02 with greater participation by the City of Springfield.

To get a handle on how the Council has done with outreach to the McKenzie community, the Council held a series of Community Conversations with residents. These were intimate gathering at peoples homes to share watershed education but also to have attendees evaluate how the Council is doing and offer ideas on how the Council could be more effective in conducting public outreach. Participants offered a great deal of good information and the MWC is incorporating this feedback into its workplan for 2002 and beyond. These meetings were so successful that the Council anticipates conducting these on a regular basis. In addition to these meetings, the Council also conducted two information sharing sessions with the larger community on watershed related issues.

The MWC continued its support of the McKenzie River Cooperative Maintenance Partnership, resulting in the installation of more common and attractive signage at recreation sites. As use of the watershed continues to grow, issues related to crime and destructive behaviors continue to emerge. In response, the Council provided a letter to Lane County Commissioners encouraging expenditure of Forest Fund dollars to increase law enforcement in the watershed. Staff also participated in boat landing security meetings to develop methods to deter problems.



The Council hired an outreach specialist, who is developing a comprehensive outreach and public involvement program as part of the Conservation Strategy. These duties have also increased the Councils' communication with local media, drawing attention to Council-related projects.

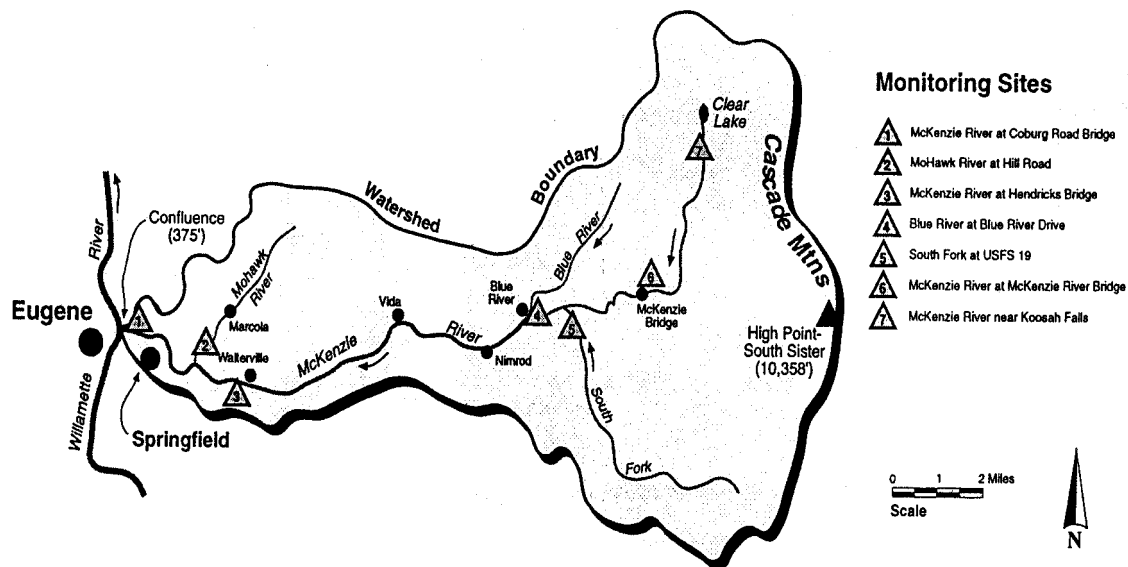
One objective of the Council has been to work with communities to develop and implement "entrance" plans that incorporate environmentally friendly plants and enhance watershed aesthetics. The Council provided funding for native plant purchases at the entrance to Blue River and McKenzie Bridge. Staff also consulted with ODOT regarding survival of plants at Leaburg Lake, which has been poor. Community concerns have increased, and the Council is working to develop a landscaping plan through a public participation process. The goal is for implementation in FY02.

The MWC action plan includes a goal to provide teachers, students, and non-formal educators with tools and training to implement education watershed-related activities. To meet this end, numerous presentations, field trips, and interactions with educators occurred in FY01. Over 300 students participated in Council programs. The education portion of the MWC web site was updated, and the Council participated in Forest Field Days and Salmon Watch. Two teacher workshops, attended by 60 teachers, were held covering the topics of macroinvertebrate and water quality sampling.



Monitoring and Evaluation Accomplishments

The Council has implemented a strong water quality monitoring program for the past several years. In FY01, a comprehensive review of the program was conducted to determine its efficacy and evaluate recommendations from past data. The results included the following: 1) Ambient data will continue to be collected and summarized; 2) Storm even monitoring was discontinued; 3) Macroinvertebrate sampling continued, supported by an OWEB grant for the fourth year; 4) Cedar Creek continues to be monitored by students. A meeting was held with SUB, EWEB, and the City of Springfield. They now play a larger role in the monitoring. Student monitoring is also planned on Camp and Potter Creeks beginning in Oct. 01. Additionally, sampling in the Mohawk continues, and an OWEB grant was submitted to support and expand its objectives to address bacteria and temperature concerns.



MWC staff and student volunteers continue to monitor Gate, Deer and Cedar Creeks restoration projects. Data on survival rate of planted trees indicates success, despite heavy competition with exotic weeds. Results are being incorporated into future planting.

Interaction with local schools and educators continued to grow through the efforts of the Council's Education Coordinator and its committee, comprised of staff from Council Partner organizations. Many presentations, field trips, and interactions occurred, with over 300 students participating in educational programs.

Mass mailings in FY01 included distribution of information on the care and maintenance of septic systems.



The MWC continues to be involved in the local communities through efforts such as assisting the McKenzie Fire department in developing survey of equipment and preparedness of local agencies to address hazardous spills. Staff will aid with the subsequent grant for equipment to fill in the gaps.

Coordination for the Future

It is planned for 2002, that the MWC will continue to implement a broad-based program that coordinates fish, wildlife and water quality programs along with incorporating public outreach and education components through all of the Council's work. For the coming year, the Council will also continue to develop restoration and protection projects based from the Council's Conservation Strategy. 2002 will in a sense be a transition year for the Council, where the Council will be setting the stage to move largely into conservation project implementation in 2003 and beyond. The MWC anticipates an increased BPA role in the McKenzie watershed in the future, largely through support of project implementation. In addition, the MWC will play an active role in the Subbasin Planning effort and conduct activities in response to NMFS's biop indicating Reasonable and Prudent Measures. The MWC efforts, through Conservation Planning, implementation and education, furthers the goals outlined in the Northwest Power Planning Council's Columbia River Basin Fish and Wildlife Program.

